

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BRUSSE 13324 01 OF 02 100816Z  
ACTION A-01

INFO OCT-01 EUR-08 ISO-00 H-03 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00  
/028 W

-----070837 100820Z /12

O 100753Z JUL 78

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7738

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

WHITEHOUSE WASHDC

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY MADRID

USMISSION USNATO

USNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BRUSSELS 13324

DEPT PLEASE PASS SENATOR BYRD'S OFFICE

FOLLOWING REPEAT BRUSSELS 13324 SENT LONDON QTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BRUSSELS 13324

FOR CODEL BYRD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OREP (BYRD, SEN. ROBERT C.) PEPR MARR MPOL BE US

SUB JECT: SENATOR BYRD'S VISIT TO BELGIUM: MEETINGS

WITH PRIME MINISTER TINDEMANS AND MINISTER

OF DEFENSE VANDEN BOEYNANTS

REFS: (A) BRUSSELS 13260 (B) USNATO 6686 (C) BONN 12294

1. BELGIAN MEDIA REACTION TO SENATOR BYRD'S VISIT TO  
BELGIUM, INCLUDING COVERAGE OF HIS PRESS CONFERENCES,  
WAS REPORTED IN REFS A AND B. AS NOTED REF C,  
SENATOR BYRD CONVEYED SAME MESSAGE ON US SUPPORT FOR NATO  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BRUSSE 13324 01 OF 02 100816Z

AND LTDP TO HIS INTERLOCUTORS IN BRUSSELS AS HE SUBSE-  
QUENTLY DID IN BONN. WHILE HERE HE ALSO ADDRESSED  
QUESTIONS SPECIFICALLY INVOLVING BELGIUM, MOST NOTABLY  
OUR DESIRE FOR BELGIAN PARTICIPATION IN AWACS AND NEED FOR  
BELGIUM TO FILL SERIOUS GAP IN HAWK BELT. FOLLOWING  
REPORTS BELGIAN REACTIONS AND COMMENTS, INCLUDING PRIME  
MINISTER TINDEMANS' STATEMENTS CONCERNING EUROPEAN

MONETARY SYSTEM.

2. AWACS. IN REPLY TO SENATOR BYRD'S DEMARCHE ON AWACS, DEFENSE MINISTER VANDEN BOEYNANTS (WHO USED HIS CHEF DE CABINET AS INTERPRETER) SAID HE WOULD BE FRANK. FROM THE BEGINNING HE HAS STRESSED, HE SAID, FINANCIAL PROBLEM INVOLVED. BELGIAN ROLE WOULD HAVE TO BE LIMITED TO ADAPTING ITS CURRENT ELECTRONIC NETWORK TO AWACS SYSTEM AND MAKING NECESSARY OPERATIONAL CHANGES. IT IS BELGIUM'S INTENTION TO INTERFACE WITH AWACS ELECTRONIC SYSTEM. MORE UPBEAT (OR, MORE LIKELY, LESS FULLY BRIEFED) PRIME MINISTER TINDEMANS SAID IN REPLY TO SAME DEMARCHE THAT BELGIAN PARTICIPATION IN AWACS WAS A "POSSIBILITY," THAT THERE WAS LESS OPPOSITION TO IT THAN TO HAWK, AND THAT A DECISION HAD NOT YET BEEN REACHED. (COMMENT: WE BELIEVE THAT DEFENSE MINISTER'S PRESENTATION ACCURATELY REPRESENTS CURRENT BELGIAN POSITION).

3. HAWK. DEFENSE MINISTER VANDEN BOEYNANTS SAID THAT THE "POLITICAL BATTLE" ON THIS SUBJECT STILL CONTINUES INSIDE THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT. THE NECESSARY MONEY HAS BEEN BUDGETED, BUT THERE IS STRONG SOCIALIST OPPOSITION. "WE HAVE A FOREIGN MINISTER WHO WHEN IN WASHINGTON OR AT NATO LETS IT BE HEARD THAT HE IS FOR IT, BUT IN THE GOVERNMENT DEFERS TO HIS PARTY." ASKING SENATOR BYRD TO STRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF A POSITIVE DECISION WHEN HE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BRUSSE 13324 01 OF 02 100816Z

TALKED LATER WITH TINDEMANS, HE SAID "I KNOW THB PRIME MINISTER IS IN FAVOR, BUT HE HAS NOT TAKEN A DECISION. TELL HIM THAT WE ARE ENDANGERING THE AERIAL DEFENSE OF EUROPE BY ALLOWING THE GAP."

4. AT SUBSEQUENT MEETING, TINDEMANS DESCRIBED HIS GOVERNMENT'S DIFFICULT POLITICAL SITUATION (LIKE VANDEN BOEYNANTS HE HAD BEEN UP ALL PREVIOUS NIGHT AT CABINET MEETING DISCUSSING GOVERNMENT'S REGIONALIZATION PROGRAM). LEADING A COALITION GOVERNMENT WITH SIX PARTIES INVOLVED ETERNAL NEGOTIATING, ESPECIALLY WHEN POLITICAL LEADERS CREAIED NEW DIFFICULTIES EVERY WEEK WITH PUBLIC STATEMENTS. REGARDING HAWK, HE SAID THAT HE WAS STRONGLY IN FAVOR. FORMER GOVERNMENTS, HOWEVER, HAD MADE TWO MISTAKES. FIRST STATEMENTS CONCERNING HAWK IN 1972 WERE NOT CONVINCING. NEW GOVERNMENT IN 1974 (I.E., TINDEMANS' FIRST GOVERNMENT) THOUGHT IT WAS NOT NECESSARY TO PURCHASE HAWK. SINCE THEN THE NEED TO BUY HAWK HAS BECOME APPARENT ONLY BIT BY BIT, AND THIS HAS NOT HELPED EITHER. MAIN PARTIES IN CURRENT GOVERNMENT ARE SOCIAL CHRISTIANS AND SOCIALISTS, AND SOCIALISTS TEND TO HAVE ANTI-MILITARY ATTITUDE. AS HAWK

WAS NOT MADE PART OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAM, THE  
SOCIALISTS FEEL THAT THEY ARE NOT OBLIGED TO ACCEPT IT.  
BELGIAN PUBLIC OPINION, THEY SAY, WOULD NOT UNDERSTAND.  
THE TWO SOCIALIST CO-PRESIDENTS ARE MAKING WEEKLY  
(NEGATIVE) STATEMENTS ON SUBJECT; IT IS EASY TO  
MAKE STATEMENTS. THERE IS STILL HOPE, HE SAID,  
BUT IT WILL BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT.

5. LTDP. REPLYING TO SENATOR BYRD'S INITIAL PRESEN-  
TATION, VANDEN BOEYNANTS SAID THAT HE AGREED CONCERNING  
THREAT OF SOVIET BUILDUP AND HAS BEEN CAMPAIGNING IN  
BELGIUM FOR PAST THREE YEARS TO MAKE SOVIET DANGER  
KNOWN. HE SAID THAT UNTIL LAST YEAR BELGIUM HAD BEEN  
INCREASING ITS MILITARY EFFORT, NOT ONLY BY 3 BUT BY  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BRUSSE 13324 01 OF 02 100816Z

OVER 4 IN 1975-76. NOW, HOWEVER, BELGIUM HAS BEEN HIT  
BY AN ECONOMIC CRISIS. UNFORTUNATELY, BELGIUM IS A VICTIM  
OF SOCIAL LEGISLATION THAT IS TOO GENEROUS, AND THE  
BELGIAN POPULATION HAS GOT INTO HABIT OF TOO EASY A WAY  
OF LIFE. CONCERNING LTDP, BELGIANS HAVE FROM BEGINNING  
SAID THEY ARE READY TO STUDY PROGRAM AND TO PARTICIPATE,  
BUT THINK FOR ALL EUROPEAN COUNTRIES THE FIRST PROJECT  
IS UNFORTUNATELY TOO AMBITIOUS GIVEN THE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BRUSSE 13324 02 OF 02 100805Z  
ACTION A-01

INFO OCT-01 EUR-08 ISO-00 H-03 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00  
/028 W

-----070783 100820Z /12

O 100800Z JUL 78  
FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7739  
INFO SECDEF WASHDC  
WHITEHOUSE WASHDC  
AMEMBASSY BONN  
AMEMBASSY MADRID  
USMISSION USNATO  
USNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BRUSSELS 13324

DEPT PLEASE PASS SENATOR BYRD'S OFFICE

FOR CODEL BYRD

CURRENTLY BEING CONFRONTED. WHEN BELGIUM MAKES A COMMITMENT, HE SAID, WE WANT TO BE ABLE TO RESPECT IT. WHEN ASKED SPECIFICALLY WHETHER BELGIUM WOULD BE APPLYING 3 PERCENT LTDP PLAN, TINDEMANS SAID THAT BELGIUM WOULD RESPECT AGREEMENT REACHED IN LONDON TWO YEARS AGO. HE SAID THAT AGREEMENT IN WASHINGTON WAS ONE OF PRINCIPLE, AND NOT ONE OF CONCRETE FIGURES.

6. EUROPEAN MONETARY SYSTEM. AFTER STRESSING THAT HE IS STRONGLY ATLANTIC-MINDED ("OUR DESTINY IS THE SAME"), TINDEMANS DECLARED THAT FRIENDS OF THE UNITED STATES IN BELGIUM AND GERMANY ARE VERY WORRIED ABOUT AMERICAN ATTITUDES TOWARD MONETARY PROBLEMS. THE GREAT MASS OF DOLLARS CURRENTLY CIRCULATING CONSTITUTES A PERMANENT DANGER TO EUROPEAN ECONOMIES, E.G. IF OIL-PRODUCING  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BRUSSE 13324 02 OF 02 100805Z

COUNTRIES WANTED A CURRENCY OTHER THAN DOLLARS. A "GREAT NEGOTIATION" IS NECESSARY. THE UNITED STATES' BALANCE OF PAYMENTS DEFICIT AND OIL CONSUMPTION ARE BASIC FACTORS. FRIENDS IN GERMANY SAY THAT WE CANNOT GO ON THIS WAY. THIS IS WHY A EUROPEAN MONETARY SYSTEM IS NEEDED. TINDEMANS SAID THAT HE WAS SAD THAT BROAD-SCALE NEGOTIATIONS (I.E. INCLUDING THE U.S.) HAD NOT TAKEN PLACE EARLIER. NOW WHAT IS BEING THOUGHT OF IS "A KIND OF BRETTON WOODS ONLY FOR EUROPE." HE REGRETTED, HE SAID, THAT WE COULD NOT DO IT TOGETHER.

7. TINDEMANS EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR SENATOR BYRD'S COMMENTS CONCERNING SALT II, WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS VERY IMPORTANT. IF THERE ARE NO RESULTS FROM GENEVA, "EVERYTHING ELSE IS LITERATURE."

8. BOTH TINDEMANS AND VANDEN BOEYNANTS EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR STRONG STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT FOR NATO, WITH VANDEN BOEYNANTS COMMENTING AT END OF MEETING THAT, IF IT WERE NOT FOR THE AMERICANS DURING WORLD WAR II, BELGIANS WOULD NOT BE FREE MEN TODAY. UNQTE. DE TARR

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PRIME MINISTER, VISITS, MEETINGS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 10 jul 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1978BRUSSE13324  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D780281-1069  
**Format:** TEL  
**From:** BRUSSELS  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1978/newtext/t19780781/aaaacpxx.tel  
**Line Count:** 220  
**Litigation Code IDs:**  
**Litigation Codes:**  
**Litigation History:**  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Message ID:** ce8ee378-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Office:** ACTION A  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 5  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 78 BRUSSELS 13260, 78 USNATO 6686, 78 BONN 12294  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 19 may 2005  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 2074067  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** JECT: SENATOR BYRD'S VISIT TO BELGIUM: MEETINGS WITH PRIME MINISTER TINDEMANS AND MINISTER OF DEFENSE VANDEN BOEYNANTS  
**TAGS:** OREP, PEPR, MARR, MPOL, BE, US, (BYRD, ROBERT C)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvkey:** odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/ce8ee378-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014